CONTINUING EDUCATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA'S COLLEGES AND INSTITUTES:

A Foundation for Lifelong Learning

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Preface

The Centre for Policy Studies in Education (CPSE), UBC, has prepared this report, under contract to the Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development, for the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. It is based on:

- the Report of the Continuing Education Project Advisory Committee
- information gathered from colleges, institutes, and school districts and their representatives
- various national and provincial statistics and publications
- the views of several continuing education practitioners, scholars, and advocates in B.C.

This report represents the views and consensus of the members of the Continuing Education Project Advisory Committee and not necessarily those of the organizations that the members represent. The report's main purpose is to provide recommendations on public policy regarding continuing education in B.C.

A limited number of copies of the Report of the Continuing Education Project Advisory Committee, including its complete appendices, are available from Dr. Nick Rubidge, Colleges and International Education Branch, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology.

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- Many senior administrators, faculty, and staff in the following colleges, institutes, and school districts provided data, information, perspectives, and input critical to the completion of this proj...

Colleges and Institutes

B.C. Institute of Technology
Camosun College
Capilano College
Cariboo College
College of New Caledonia
Douglas College
East Kootenay Community College
Emily Carr College of Art & Design
Fraser Valley College
Justice Institute of B.C.
Kwantlen College
Malaspina College
Northern Lights College
North Island College
Northwest Community College
Okanagan College
Open Learning Agency
Pacific Marine Training Institute
Selkirk College
Vancouver Community College

School Districts

Trail
Quesnel
Langley
Surrey
Delta
Richmond
Vancouver
North Vancouver
West Vancouver
Sunshine Coast
Howe Sound
Queen Charlotte
Prince George
Sooke
Gulf Islands
Lake Cowichan
Campbell River

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- The Continuing Education Project Advisory Committee and its subcommittees played a pivotal role in keeping this project on track and contributed unique insight and advice.

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Blair Wilson, Canadian Manufacturers' Association

- Special thanks to Bill Day (Project Manager) and Barbara Clague (Administrative Assistant) for their strong commitment to this project and for their leadership and energy in managing the project and providing most of its research and analysis.

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Summary

Continuing education in B.C. is a major educational contributor to a learning culture. It deals primarily with part-time students, is flexible and innovative in course delivery and content, and its administrators and professional staff—despite a lack of government support—have kept the continuing education concept viable throughout the 1980s.

At the request of Deans and Directors of Continuing Education in B.C. colleges and institutes, the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology commissioned this paper to review this important area and to provide recommendations on continuing education public policy. Under the leadership of the Centre for Policy Studies in Education (UBC), this report is a result of an intensive eight-month project including an advisory committee and consultation with several stakeholder organizations. As well as policy recommendations, this report provides the full summary of past, present, and future perspectives on continuing education in B.C.

After a period of active growth in the 1970s and early 1980s, during which government funding of adult education and the concept of continuing education were enshrined in the *College and Institute Act*, the recession of 1982 led to education budget cuts in 1983. Continuing education was specifically targeted, and its grant systems eliminated. However, it grew relative to the adult population, albeit with a significant shift to part-time vocational studies, the only type of continuing education program that the government still funds as a matter of policy. Overall, during this period continuing education began to be treated more as a market commodity than as a public service. Colleges and institutes reduced numbers of personnel and simplified structures, running their continuing education units on a cost-recovery basis. There has also been increased joint activity with other institutions in running co-sponsored programs.

Nevertheless, continuing education in 1991 served a constituency of students that was equal in size to the population of the third largest institution in the college/institute system (the equivalent of 5,078 full-time students). Altogether it brought in $36 million in 1990-1991, one third of which, directly or indirectly, was from government sources. Financial analysis remains difficult, however, because of different institutional structures and reporting procedures. The Project found that there were marked increases in registrations for computer-related continuing education programs, but also found that administrators singled out community service or general interest programs as being most successful in meeting community needs.

The Project Advisory Committee found that there is a need for a continuing education strategy to address the lack of definition in the *College and Institute Act*, and the lack of government policy and leadership in this area. There are expectations on the part of the government that institutions become more entrepreneurial; yet developing short-term relevant courses with no support will not contribute to the creation of a training culture, let alone a learning culture. The funding system remains oriented towards volume-driven, repetitive, full-time traditional programs. While there is much scope for continuing education to contribute to citizenry in its broadest sense, there is concern that there has been erosion of services to community groups and concern that the system might not be accessible.

These concerns extend beyond the continuing education system and into the client groups it serves or might serve. They also reflect dissatisfaction with the status quo. At the same time, however, there seems to be a desire on the part of business, industry, volunteer organizations, government organizations, and First Nations peoples to enter into a real partnership with continuing education units and to further develop continuing education so it can, in turn, contribute to the economic, social, and educational well-being of B.C. citizens. The Project Advisory Committee has accordingly recommended some specific changes to the *College and Institute Act* and the adoption of six supporting policies. It has also proposed a specific action plan (see Chapter Six, p.35).

One: Introduction— The Continuing Education Project

Background

Lifelong learning and recurrent education have become important organizing principles for supporting B.C.'s economic and social goals. Continuing education is an important component of B.C.'s post-secondary education system that reflects these principles. Yet, ironically, at a time when "continuing education" as a concept has become critical to individual and collective economic and social goals, many people perceive continuing education as having become marginal as a public policy instrument.

The *College and Institute Act* of British Columbia mandates all institutions governed by the Act to provide "continuing education," but provides no operational definition. The interpretation of this mandate, by institutions and the Ministry, has been situational. The situation has changed since the early 1980s, when data was regularly collected concerning all formal and non-formal, credit and non-credit, funded and non-funded continuing education activities sponsored by colleges, institutes, and school districts.

The "restraint" program of 1982 to 1985 most significantly affected continuing education. Direct and indirect funding of many types of continuing education in colleges and institutes was eliminated; in colleges, institutes, and school districts, some programs were cut; formal data collection was restricted to programs directly funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, which assumed responsibility for all post-secondary education, including continuing education, when it was created in 1986.

However, because of the continued force of the continuing education mandate, because of constituency expectations of the role of colleges and institutes, and because of the value systems of professional staffs and boards, all colleges and institutes are providing some non-funded, part-time programs and services for adult learners, as are many school districts. Many related activities are currently funded by the Ministry, including those at the Open Learning Agency, the Emily Carr College of Art & Design, and certain non-formal learning activities at smaller and rural colleges, although none of these meet the formal requirements for public grant funding. It is clear that a variety of non-funded activities are being sponsored, involving thousands of students, millions of dollars, and having direct and indirect effects on organizations, expectations, and resource allocation. Yet these activities are neither very evident nor reported on.

Meanwhile, an expectation has evolved among federal and provincial government stakeholders that institutions are to seek collaborative, joint, and alternative relationships with other parties to fund adult learning activities that used to be funded by government. It is assumed that colleges and institutes are organized and resourced in ways that enable them to develop and deliver partnership-based, externally funded, and co-managed programs. Of the many developmental and management issues that arise from this situation, the central challenge is posed by non-funded, non-credit, and market-driven continuing education activities to the organized, structured, and intensely unionized activities of government funded, institutionally accredited programs and units that administer them. Conversely, many potential partners and supporters of non-funded programs desire the status, quality assurance, and accountability found in formally funded and accredited programs.

The Project

In 1989, the Deans and Directors of Continuing Education in colleges and institutes identified as a priority the need for information on the nature of, extent of, and barriers to continuing education in B.C. They requested the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology to resume collecting information on continuing education in B.C., so that the resulting data could be shared and discussed as a basis for policy development. The Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology had continuing education's recent background of relative marginality and its potential promise in mind when it commissioned the Continuing Education Project through the Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development (CCPD). The CCPD contracted with the Centre for Policy Studies in Education at the University of British Columbia to manage the project.

The support of Ministry officials and of the Council of Chief Executive Officers of colleges and institutes was sought and obtained, and through a series of discussions a set of needs for information and analysis was developed. Under the leadership of the Centre for Policy Studies in Education, the project began its work in May 1991 and finished December 31, 1991. A Continuing Education Project Advisory Committee of persons drawn from the Ministry, colleges and institutes, school district adult education units, the First Nations, organized labour, industry, higher education, and the community sector was created to identify the project objectives and consult with representatives of B.C. colleges, institutes, and school districts. The findings and recommendations presented in this document are unanimously endorsed by the Project Advisory Committee.

Objectives

The Continuing Education Project aimed to provide a comprehensive survey and analysis of continuing education in B.C., and to suggest future directions in the light of current social, economic, and educational realities. Specifically, the formal objectives of the Project were:

- the creation of a reporting format to produce annual data for the use of the Ministry and the institutions regarding
  - the nature and quantity of educational activity that is not base funded
  - the resources generated and consumed
  - the constituencies served
- the development of an appropriate terminology and classification system for such reports
- a survey to provide current data in the form just described for the academic year 1990-1991.
- a retrospective report bridging the years 1981-1991, highlighting significant changes in program offerings and modes of operation
- an assessment of the significance of activities presently carried out as non-funded/continuing education/community education, with special reference to the relationships to the formal or base-funded activities of the institutions
- a review and assessment of programs of adult and continuing education offered by school districts, universities, and other social and economic organizations for existing co-operative relationships with college and institute programs, including service or contract arrangements
- an assessment of the possible future role(s) of the colleges and institutes in developing and implementing ongoing high-quality programs of technical, vocational, and professional education in cooperation with business, industry, labour, and social service and voluntary organizations
- a review of the nature and extent of participation patterns of various adult constituencies in continuing education endeavours in colleges and institutes (to include consideration of the barriers to access for certain constituencies).

Definition and Scope

The operating definition of continuing education in this report is, *"Any part-time or short-term educational program organized for adult learners, designed to provide knowledge, skills, and understanding to meet personal, occupational, or community needs."*

During the 1980s, terminology used to categorize different types of continuing education offerings changed. Herein personal interest and community service courses or programs have been grouped together under the category of general interest.

The mandate of this study is specifically related to institutions governed by the *College and Institute Act*. Consequently, the university contribution is not addressed, but is acknowledged as an important system in its own right. Information from school district continuing education units was solicited and used for comparative purposes.

The Pacific Marine Training Institute, although it operates under the *College and Institute Act*, is excluded because of its distinctive nature and operation. Open Learning Agency information has been included, because of that organization's comprehensive public adult education mandate.

Information Sources

Ministry statistical reports for 1983-1984, data from some of the institutions for 1984-1990 inclusive, Statistics Canada *Adult Education and Training Survey* data for 1985 and 1990, and institutional internal activity and financial data reports for 1990-1991 have been combined with surveys and discussions with the Advisory Committee to form the basis of the study findings. In addition, key administrators of colleges and institutes, school districts and universities whose tenures coincided with the 1981-1991 period were interviewed; the boxed comments in this report are drawn from their responses. Written comments of key constituencies affected by continuing education services were also solicited.

The balance of this report is organized in the following manner:

Chapter Two examines the development of continuing education in B.C., with special emphasis on the shifts occurring from 1983 to 1991.

Chapter Three takes a look at current continuing education practices in B.C. post-secondary institutions, their volume, and financial structure; it includes some examples of innovative programs that meet community needs.

Chapter Four reviews the key issues facing continuing education policy.

Chapter Five provides an overview of continuing education's needs for the future and summarizes the concerns of various provincial constituencies with regard to the general activities of colleges and institutes.

Chapter Six concludes this report with discussion and recommendations for the future development of continuing education in B.C.

Two: The Development of Continuing Education in B.C.

Before focussing on the critical period of development of continuing education in B.C., 1983-1991, this chapter provides a brief summary of its historical development.

Since the first industrial revolution, it has been recognized that education is a powerful force for social and economic development. In Canada, following World War II, the principle of equal access to university education for qualified youths became a public expectation, increasing during the 1960s. During this entire period, there had also been a steadily developing field of adult education, with its roots in both volunteer activity by religious, political, labour, and social organizations, and in the efforts of industry to train, retrain, and upgrade its labour force. The education of adults has always served two basic needs: technical empowerment and access to basic education as a civic right.

The term "continuing education" first arose in the late 1950s and early 1960s with the explosive growth of school district-sponsored adult education programs. It implied a natural continuation of the formal studies of childhood and youth. This was followed by a period of institutional expansion. From the mid-1960s and through to the mid-1970s, the federal and provincial governments funded the B.C. Institute of Technology, two new universities, and a chain of adult vocational schools and their successors—fifteen community colleges. Four more institutes with specialized province-wide mandates were created by the early 1980s.

Both federal and provincial governments also saw fit to fund adult education in school districts, colleges, and institutes. The nature of the new institutions and their need for identity and clientele served to blur the difference between education of adults and adult education. Furthermore, continuing education's association with volunteerism and learner autonomy has linked it with entrepreneurial activity, while its social activist origins have associated it with educational equity and compensatory education.

By 1976, when three major reviews of the system took place, college and school district adult education in B.C. was serving 260,000 students. A product of one of the reviews, the "Report on Continuing and Community Education in British Columbia" made 105 recommendations, among them systematic full funding of adult basic education. Subsequently, "continuing education" or adult education in public post-secondary institutions was entrenched in the *College and Institute Act*. Continuing education continued to grow. By 1982-1983, the college and active school district continuing education units combined were serving almost 400,000 students, an increase of 53% in seven years.

The start of a major economic recession in 1982 led to a government restraint program in 1983, reducing government expenditures in education. Adult and continuing education activities were among the areas targeted, and their grant systems in colleges and institutes were eliminated. Similarly, reporting on continuing education virtually ceased. This policy shift created a chain of events that precipitated numerous changes in B.C.'s college and institute system. These changes necessitated adaptation by institutions.

The institutions underwent overall financial cutbacks, which they were expected to manage internally, on the theory that public service would be least interrupted if those directly affected could reallocate resources. While adult and continuing education grants were eliminated rather than reduced, government was silent on the questions of expectation of continued services. The mandate for "continuing education" in the Act remained unchanged, but the effects on continuing education were profound. Continuing education's lack of long-term clients made it particularly vulnerable to this period of financial stress.

What did change, in a pronounced manner, were the continuing education units and activities. Continuing education activities occur in a relatively open "market" economy: costs are paid for primarily by clients or sponsors. Mandates for increased revenue, or "profit only" policies, can be implemented without observable political backlash. Interpreting what happened over these years is complicated by the departure of key administrators and the change or removal of organizational units. Under these conditions, record keeping became inconsistent, idiosyncratic, and sometimes nonexistent.

In addition to some overall data sources cited below, the balance of this chapter is based on Ministry data for 1983-1984 and on a comprehensive survey of college, institute, and school district continuing education programs in B.C. undertaken as part of the Continuing Education Project. This collection of data was a major undertaking in itself.

Overall Adult Education Participation

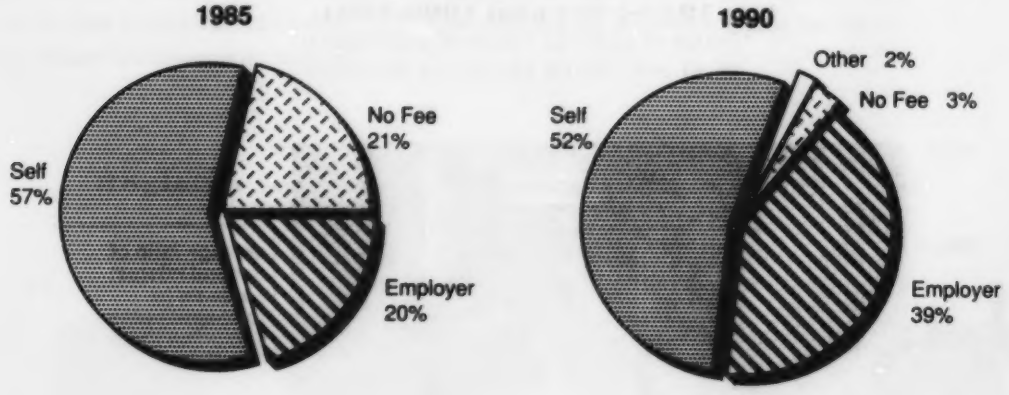
Statistics Canada's *Adult Education and Training Survey* data for 1985 and 1990 provides an overall context for adult continuing education in B.C. During the period 1985-1990, the overall participation rate for adults aged eighteen to sixty-four in short-term and part-time education activities rose considerably, from 12% to 18% of the population. These figures include part-time formal academic education activities that lie outside the scope of this study. It should be noted that a 1983 Statistics Canada study publication entitled "One in Five" found that 20% of Canadians participated in some form of adult education. This higher figure was based on a different definition than the one used by the two studies cited above. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence of a major increase in absolute and relative numbers of the adult population engaging in adult education activities during the period in question.

Statistics Canada reported an adult population increase for B.C. of 13% for the period 1983-1990. All things being equal, continuing education enrollments could have been expected to grow by 13%. Statistics collected in this project affirm this: gross general interest and part-time vocational course registrations in colleges increased by 13.4% from 1983-1984 to 1990-1991.

Shift in Payment Sources

Along with this rise in enrollment, the same Statistics Canada surveys indicate there has been a change in the source of learner funding. As Figure 1 shows, there has been a jump in the number of employers providing the funding for adult education courses, from 20% to 39%, and a smaller drop in self-funded payment, from 57% to 52%. Twenty-one percent of respondents reported having to pay no fee in 1985; this figure was down to 3% in 1990, no doubt partly as a result of budget cuts eliminating free programming. The major point here is that it seems more employers placed a higher value on education and were willing to pay for their employees to take courses. There is another reason that employers have become more involved in supporting the remarkable rise in part-time vocational programming in the continuing education system: these programs directly address employers' needs.

FIGURE 1
Who Paid for Adult Education?

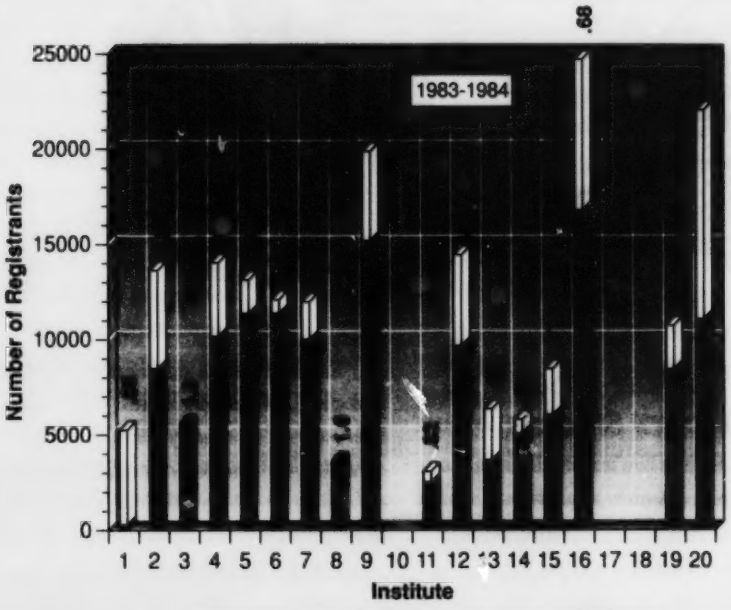


Shift to Part-time Vocational Studies

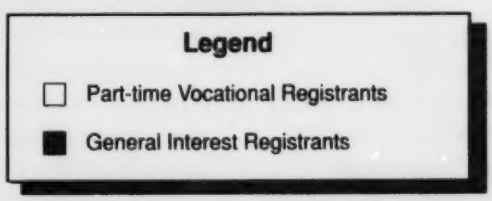
Institutional respondents to the survey undertaken for the Continuing Education Project made almost universal reference to the increase in part-time vocational programming, and this was confirmed by statistics and provincial data. The increase occurred in colleges, institutes, and school districts. Coupled with this trend was the very pronounced, though not universal, net reduction in "general" and "community" activities. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate this shift.

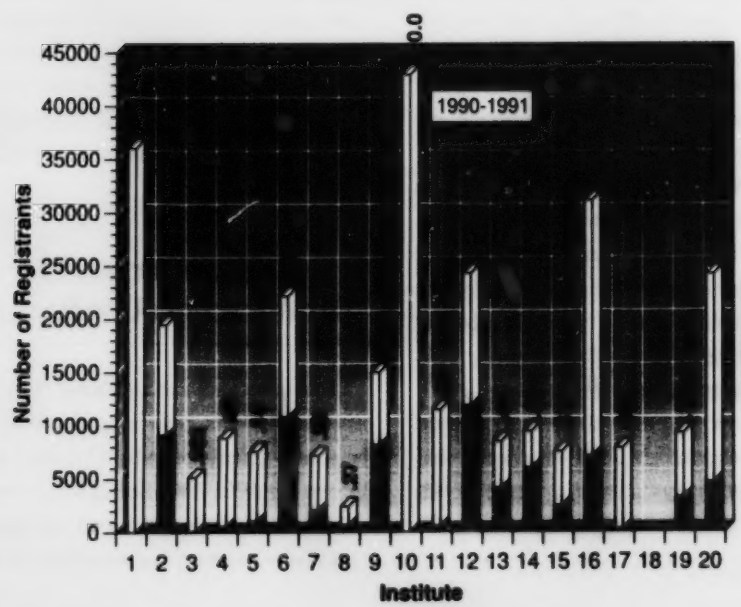
In many institutions there was a startling shift in the ratio of general interest (i.e., personal interest and community service) to total continuing education enrollments in continuing education. The proportion went from .74 to .24 over eight years. There were twice as many people enrolled in general interest courses as part-time vocational courses in 1983-1984, but only one-third as many in 1990-1991. Overall, colleges and institutes general interest enrollment dropped 48% from 1983-1984 to 1990-1991, while part-time vocational enrollments rose 310% in the same period.

FIGURE 2
Comparison of General Interest and Part-time Vocational Registrations in B.C. Colleges and Institutes 1983-1984 and 1990-1991
(ratio of general interest students to total continuing education students)



average ratio of general interest students to total continuing education students .74





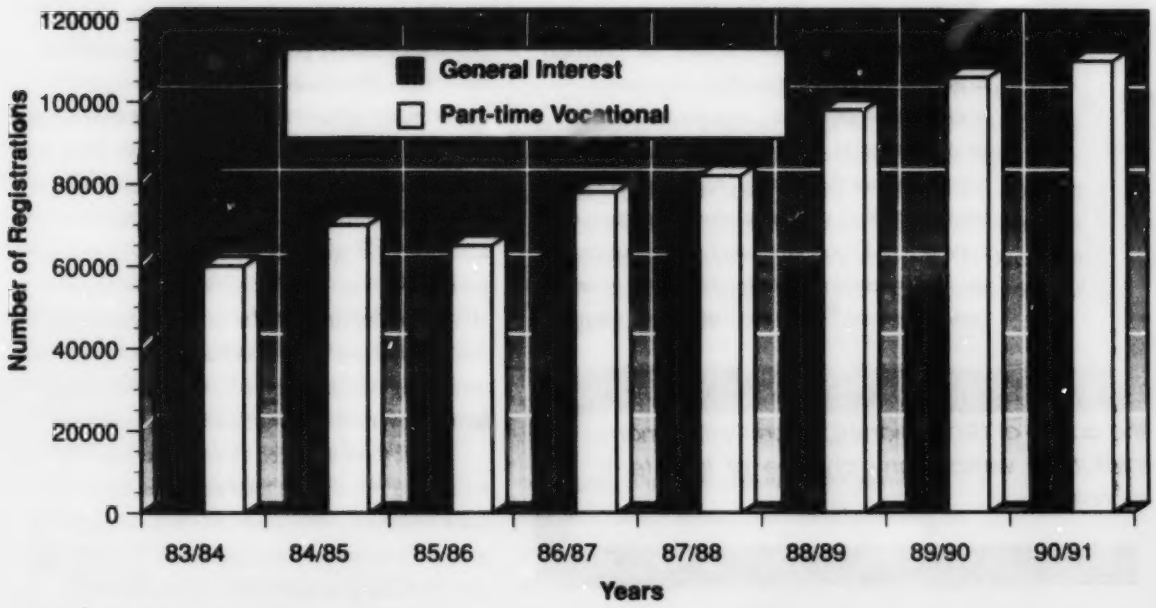
Institutes

1. B.C. Institute of Technology/ Pacific Vocational Institute
2. Camosun College
3. Capilano College
4. Cariboo College
5. College of New Caledonia
6. Douglas College
7. East Kootenay Community College
8. Emily Carr College of Art and Design
9. Fraser Valley College
10. Justice Institute of B.C.
11. Kwantlen College
12. Malaspina College
13. Northern Lights College
14. North Island College
15. Northwest Community College
16. Okanagan College
17. Open Learning Agency
18. Pacific Marine Training Institute
19. Selkirk College
20. Vancouver Community College

average ratio of general interest students to total continuing education students .24

Ten of the institutions were able to supply general interest and part-time vocational data for each year between 1983-1984 and 1990-1991. This group provides a reasonable indicator of the change because its enrollment accounts for 72% of total general interest and 83% of part-time vocational in 1983-1984 and 94% and 79%, respectively, in 1990-1991. The shift for this representative group is shown in Figure 3 below.

FIGURE 3
Registrations in Continuing Education Courses in 10 B.C. Colleges—1983-1991



The colleges' general interest programming as a share of total registration dropped from 63% in 1983-1984 to 46.8% in 1990-1991. The differential would have been much more extreme, but 1990-1991 saw a 45% increase from the previous year in general interest registrations in colleges.

It is not difficult to see that the concentration of government funding on part-time vocational offerings has profoundly influenced the volume of these offerings. Without exception, survey respondents asserted or implied that the shift in funding policy was the major creator of change during the period.

Some major shifts have also occurred within the vocational, technical, and career program sector. Marked absolute drops occurred in electrical, mechanical, and metal trades fields. Major relative drops occurred in agriculture, construction, office administration, and communication arts. *Huge absolute and relative increases have occurred in computer-related, legal and social services, and education and health-related fields over the 1983-1991 period.*

Fee Levels and Inflation

During the period of 1983-1991, the general funding of colleges and institutes was restricted, resulting in reduced levels of purchasing power. Between 1983 and 1990 the Consumer Price Index in B.C. advanced 32%, while grants to colleges

and institutes rose by only 8.1%. Student fees have increased considerably. In continuing education, programming is perceived to have followed income sources, and fees have become radically differentiated, based on market rather than equity or public service considerations. This is particularly noticeable in the non-base funded occupational programs, where dramatic increases in fees were found to have occurred during 1983-1991, from a minimum of under 100% to over 800%. This is not surprising, given the lack of consistent policy.

Interestingly, general interest and community programming appears to have had generally lower rates of fee increase than part-time vocational programming, and these roughly parallel inflation. Of course, there has also been a drastic shrinkage of such programs, because institutions have chosen to take a cost-recovery approach and concentrate on courses that can be paid for by employers or by the federal government. The reduction in areas of programming (e.g., parenting skills) that are needed by groups that tend to be less well-off is a direct consequence of this.

"This reduction in institution funding has created the career of Grantsmanship expert within many institutions without any chance of long-term planning."

The shifts in funding and programming were both the cause and effect of internal restructuring, setting of new priorities, and administrative adaptations during this period.

Administrative Adaptations

The changes associated with the administration of continuing education activities were also directly tied to reduced funding. They indicate having to do more with less in order to fulfil a self-generated mandate, and they also imply a more entrepreneurial role for continuing education administrators, one in which the financial yield of educational activities, rather than their intrinsic importance, has become paramount.

The common trend has been reduction of personnel, coupled with elimination, simplification, or consolidation of structures. This is also reflected in the methods used to financially report on continuing education activities; these varied so much that the attempt to analyze the financial information provided was a qualified failure, because of a high degree of diversity in financial and administrative policies. In some institutions, the senior officer responsible was viewed as a direct charge against the continuing education unit; in others, that individual's remuneration was not treated as part of the continuing education budget. In still other institutions, continuing education administrative positions are essentially hybrid positions and are billed to various accounts. This all tends to confirm that the colleges and institutes themselves have "bent over backwards" to sustain continuing education, even though there are no formal government rewards for doing so.

Thus, there has been an emphasis on recovering full costs of total activities, causing some continuing education units to be considered as a profit centre for their institution. As such, they also compete year after year, with a growing number of private providers of training and with ongoing education programs for students and for federal government contracts. Filling the classes and making them profitable has become a preoccupation, perhaps detracting from other functions.

This new entrepreneurial role has meant an emphasis on relatively short-cycle, entry-level and para-professional-level types of training to serve small business environments and social service related occupations. There has been a definite concentration on computer/data processing training. These adaptations do point to a certain responsiveness and creativity in the system, but they also underline its marginality. If it has no validation in provincially defined priorities or

resource allocation, continuing education will not be in a position to produce desirable change, and the organization will have little incentive to enhance coordinated, purposeful relationships within and outside the educational institutions.

Diverse Relationships

Responses to the portion of the Continuing Education Project survey dealing with relationships within institutions and outside institutions yield no consensus, making it hard to generalize. There seems to be ambiguity in the way relationships are perceived. For example, little reference was made by respondents to relationships with the Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculutralism and Human Rights and the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, except to downplay the significance of those Ministries in leadership and funding. Yet provincial funding of the part-time vocational programs is repeatedly referred to as pivotal and strategic in significance. This ambiguity also applies to relations with federal government agencies, including the Canadian Jobs Strategy program of Employment and Immigration Canada.

Similarly, there is increasing joint activity with other institutions as well as competitiveness between institutions. Within institutions, there are positive relationships with vocational/technical units, as well as friction and territorial conflict over curriculum control, with continuing education units being thought of as the "aggressors." The Continuing Education Project also found that continuing education units are thought of as trusted agents of experimentation and leadership, while the personnel involved thought of themselves as a "cash cow," under-recognized, and under-appreciated for their educational contribution. Although continuing educators see value in their ability to develop public consensus concerning the recognition and ongoing funding of Adult Basic Education, Adult Literacy, Secondary School Completion, and English as a Second Language, there is a countervailing viewpoint that these provincially funded continuing education programs have become unionized and therefore are too costly to compete or offer reasonable service for cost. This dichotomy between educational purpose and cost effectiveness appears to colour perceptions significantly. The removal of provincial funding has increased resourcefulness, pride, and self-confidence of continuing education personnel, but also made service to needy groups and individuals difficult or impossible, which in turn causes the personnel to question the perceived value of their function in the overall education system.

> *"Continuing education has not taken enough credit for the impact adult education practices generally have had on the college. The fact is that these days regular instructors, often without knowing why, consider the learner when they are preparing their courses. We know why. Because we have hammered away at it as practitioners of adult learning."*

In some areas, the perception is that strong, cooperative relationships are being developed with community organizations, especially business and industry; in other areas, previously rich relationships with community groups appear weakened or eliminated.

These inconsistencies clearly point to the need for an overall supporting policy for continuing education in B.C., a framework within which partnerships can prosper, and the larger educational goals of a system already impressive in scope can be achieved.

Three: Current Continuing Education Provision—The Invisible College

Regardless of the events of the past decade, continuing education in B.C.'s colleges and institutes, and in many school districts, is a vibrant and significant enterprise. This chapter describes current (1990-1991) services and organizations whose size, pervasiveness, province-wide impact, unique clienteles, and purposes represent a very sizeable enterprise or institution in their own right. Despite much of it not being Ministry funded, college and institute continuing education programs serve as many students (adult British Columbians) as a large college. They represent the "invisible college" in B.C. This chapter describes the various dimensions of current continuing education provision in B.C. colleges and institutes.

A considerable amount of this information is derived from the first "pilot" use of a proposed annual data collection instrument, developed by the Continuing Education Project Advisory Committee. All colleges, most school districts active in adult education, and all institutes except the Pacific Marine Training Institute (PMTI) are included in the general descriptions in the following commentary. In some specific analyses, individual institutions are named, and only limited general inferences can be made. As noted in Chapter Two, the very important contributions of the three public universities are mentioned only in passing, as they are outside the scope of this project.

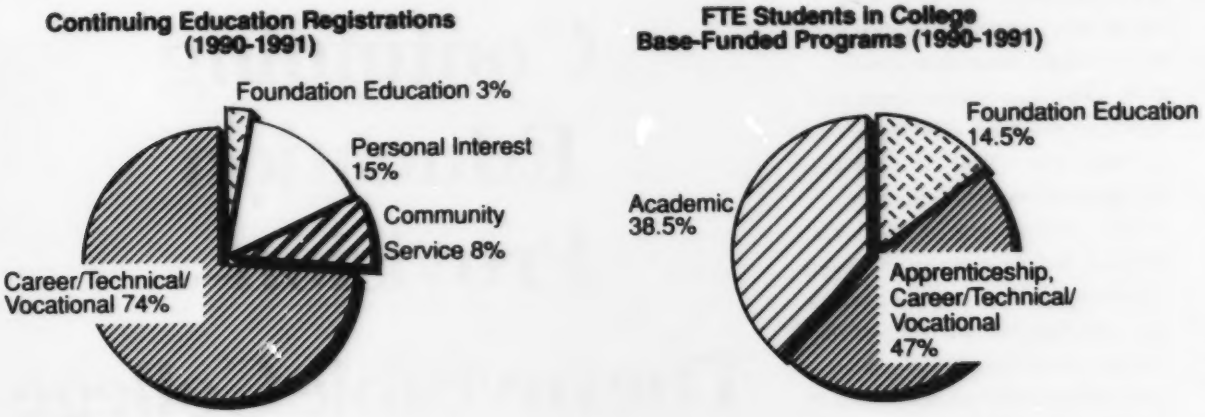
The definition of "continuing education" adopted for this study excludes part-time students registered in Ministry-funded courses and programs designed primarily for the ongoing education and training of full-time students. Thus, the following information provides an image of institutionally defined adult or continuing education, rather than describing the motivations and assumptions of the learners themselves. As a product of common practices and assumptions, these activities are usually not eligible for transcript credit because of their changeable, non-formal, and client-centred nature.

Volume

Despite the shrinking financial picture and an increasing "vocational window" of opportunity during the 1980s, continuing education grew to the point where, for 1990-1991, its total volume calculated on the basis of student full-time equivalents (FTEs) equals that of a college the size of Camosun or Kwantlen, or the equivalent of the third largest institution in the overall college/institute system. A volume of 5,078 FTEs is a significant number, considering it refers to an activity that is not even defined in the *College and Institute Act*.

If one includes school districts and university clients, B.C.'s continuing education system served over an estimated half million registrants, involving over six million contact hours.

FIGURE 4
1990-1991 Continuing Education Registrations and FTEs in Colleges and Institutes by Program Type



As Figure 4 shows, considering the college and institute registrations alone, 309,428 registrants were served by continuing education in 1990-1991 in the following proportions: 3% Foundation Education; 23% Personal Interest and Community Service; and 74% Career/ Technical/Vocational. This can be contrasted with college base-funded programs, where during the same time period 47,173 FTE students were served, in the following proportions: 14.5% Foundation Education; 47% Apprenticeship, Career/Technical/Vocational; and 38.5% Academic. Although actual registrations and FTEs are not identical, the order-of-magnitude comparison remains valid.

In the colleges alone, continuing education activities are yielding a volume of learning activity (expressed in student contact hours) of approximately 7% of regularly funded programs.

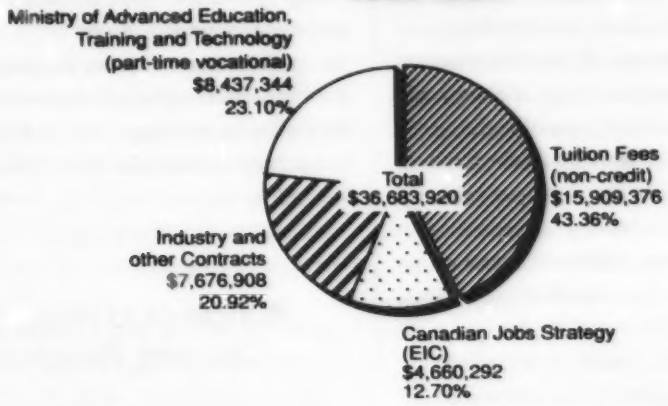
Underlining a point made several times in this report, the college profile in core funded activities is almost evenly balanced between academic and occupationally focussed programs, while college continuing education activity (expressed in FTEs) is now almost 75% occupationally related. This can be interpreted as a high degree of responsiveness within continuing education units to technological change and the demands of the workplace, but it can also be explained by the absence of government funding for continuing education programs other than those that are part-time vocational.

Financial Analysis

The Continuing Education Project also collected income data for 1990-1991 continuing education programs in colleges. Direct fiscal comparison is impossible at this time, because continuing education policies, costing assumptions, and attribution of cost and income were found to vary considerably among the institutions. Fiscal reporting is and has been a matter of convenience and tactics, rather than agreed upon principles. Describing the variations is an activity that verges on the artistic.

It is possible to summarize what income continuing education operations in the fifteen colleges brought in for the fiscal year 1990-1991, but it has to be kept in mind that the figures for each institution derive from the individual institution's policies and practices. This should not be construed as a criticism; institutions are functioning as mandated, attempting to maximize service with limited resources.

FIGURE 5
Sources of Income for Continuing Education in 15 Colleges 1990-1991



As Figure 5 indicates, tuition fees account for nearly half of overall continuing education revenue; this is approximately three times greater than the proportion of revenue that tuition fees account for in regular base-funded programs of the colleges.

The makeup of "contracts" in this description is the most problematic, because of the wide range of policies regarding accounting attribution, fiscal authority, and distribution of contract income. Employment and Immigration Canada (EIC) is the major customer of the colleges and institutes, aside from the provincial government. EIC purchases are the basis for most temporary base-funded courses and programs, and its buying of services through the Canadian Jobs Strategy constitutes the largest block of contract purchases in the system, mostly spent in the colleges. It is reasonable to conclude that of the $36 million attributed to continuing education income, over one-third is from the federal or provincial government.

Similar but even more complex problems developed when an attempt was made to compare continuing education expenditures. A global estimate was made of $32,495,000 for expenditures attributed to continuing education within the fifteen colleges. Again, because there is no common methodology throughout the system, the most that can be said here is that expenditures appear to be roughly equivalent to those of a college the size of Capilano or Camosun College.

An indication of the system's responsiveness to subsidy support, and also of its efficiency, is the considerable "overproduction" in continuing education career/technical/vocational spaces. In 1990-1991 the Ministry funded 1,629 FTEs in part-time vocational programs, and received reports from colleges and institutes showing that 2,061 FTEs were actually provided. However, as reported to this Project, the total number of student contact hours in the career/technical/vocational area was 2,884,694. When divided by the figure of 1,230 hours (the number of hours associated with one FTE), this equates to 2,345 FTEs, a 44% actual overproduction.

Reporting Policy

The range of formal policy over the fifteen colleges and three institutes that reported to the Project survey was found to be extreme, helping to explain the difficulty in consistent accounting. While the policies were clearly articulated during the project in telephone interviews and on survey forms, the impression gained was that few if any institutions had a truly formal, board-approved policy regarding financial practices for continuing education. Discussion with seven senior financial officers and eight Directors or Deans responsible indicated that the governing policies respected Ministry intent by meeting part-time

vocational FTE quotas, while meeting local needs by maximizing fee revenue.

Virtually all of the institutions reporting expected to realize direct income from their continuing education units. Of the 17 institutions responding to the question, twelve attributed only direct costs of instruction (wages of staff, supplies), while five attributed both direct and indirect costs (including heat, light, janitorial, and prorated general services).

Offsetting the considerable difference in costs associated with these two different approaches was the fact that of the five institutions attributing both direct and indirect costs, all but one provided for an institutional subsidy. Of the twelve attributing direct costs only, four provided some subsidy, three required "break even" on direct costs, and five expected a net profit against direct costs. A large variation was also found regarding the inclusion of administrative and staff services in continuing education "costs."

In some institutions, remuneration for the senior official responsible was viewed as a direct charge against the continuing education unit; in others, this official was viewed as a college or institute official, and not part of the continuing education budget. In other cases (e.g., East Kootenay, Northwest, and Northern Lights Colleges), administrators of centres are viewed as having "hybrid" positions, and their remunerations are billed to various accounts.

In all but one institution, it appears that there is either direct or indirect institutional support for the continuing education function. The costing of such support is extremely difficult, if not impossible.

Range and Nature of Courses, Programs

The range of subject matters addressed by continuing education courses, together with their varied forms of organization and delivery and their differing target student populations, make it difficult to provide an orderly and comprehensive description. However, various continuing education programs can be described. Figure 6 classifies occupationally related continuing education programs that:

- were reported on in the project survey
- involve at least 60 contact hours
- issue a document at the completion of the course.

FIGURE 6
1990-1991 College and Institute Continuing Education Programs (minimum 60 contact hours)

Figure 6 lists only the vocational programs offered in about half of the college/institutes, and is thus merely illustrative. It is interesting, however, to note a total of only one program in the Marine category (in a province with an enormous coastline) and of only one program in the Communications Arts category (in the so-called Information Age). Readers are encouraged to draw their own conclusions from this sample. The extreme range and grouping of registrations is an indicator of the "market response" capacity of college and institutes.

It is noteworthy that, in 1990-1991, 34% of total registrations in colleges were in the three related fields of Business Administration, Office Administration, and Computer Science/Data Processing, with the latter category alone accounting for 16% of total registrations. Health Related offerings are the largest single province-wide grouping, absorbing 22% of college-based registrations. The phenomenal interest and activity in the area of computing and computer-based learning was the subject of universal comment. In 1990-1991, the colleges and institutes alone recorded approximately 26,000 registrations for such courses.

Many comments were received that indicated that registrations, especially in urban centres, were effectively limited by availability of equipment, and that there exists fierce competition from core and temporary-funded programs for instructional space. It would appear that the college, institute, and school district programs over the past seven years have provided computing-related instruction to over 250,000 course registrants—a formidable response to, and enabler of, a major aspect of social and economic change.

Continuing education now takes place within four main streams:

Career/ Technical/Vocational: programs in which students are retrained for the labour market, have their skills upgraded, or learn certain generic skills required in a wide range of jobs

Foundation Education: programs that focus on the acquisition of the basic literacy, numeracy, and life skills required to function as a citizen, parent, or worker (e.g., Adult Basic Education)

Personal Interest: programs that pertain to personal skills and understandings and the effective use of leisure time for personal development (e.g., floral design or assertiveness training)

Community Service: programs with a clear link to community life and which may contribute to the resolution of specific issues of community concern (e.g., pollution, parent education, mental illness, nutrition).

These last two have been combined for purposes of this study as "General Interest." Their importance is easy to underestimate, but they obviously can have wider benefits than the acquisition of a few marketable skills:

- general interest courses bring members of the same community together; they offer chances for personal development that are hard to measure
- they may stimulate an interest in further education
- they can draw on volunteers and gifted amateurs
- they may broaden people's minds and serve to awaken their interest in hitherto unexamined aspects of life and society, without a financial motive
- they can facilitate local community development
- they often serve members of the community traditionally not involved in education.

Such programs are not just there for the taking—they reach out. They can transcend the usual hierarchical, "two-class" world of teachers and students to serve larger needs. They are not merely "hobby" courses for the idle; they meet community and larger social needs. Project survey responses were consistent in describing continuing education as valuable to the community because of the relevant and flexible nature of the programs, which better enables them to meet

community needs. This is especially true in smaller communities, where initial involvement through continuing education leads to further contact between the learner and the institution.

All mandate statements from the Continuing Education Project survey concentrated on the provision of non-credit courses and programs on a part-time, or short-term, cost-recovery basis. Programs were described as learner centred, but they not only deal with a wide range of student personal, social, and vocational concerns, they develop new markets/clients for the institution and provide new opportunities for faculty. Many of these new challenges come from general interest and community service programs and courses.

"We have become in effect the 'skunk works' for the college, to use the 'excellence terminology,' and most new programs and ventures have come in through the Continuing Education door. Our ability to manage new ventures is probably unmatched in the 'traditional' college management structure.

Even though general interest and community service activities do not exactly fit into the regularized full-time college world, and even though there have been no formal encouragements or incentives, colleges, institutes, and school districts served more than 154,000 registrants in such courses in 1990-1991.

"Shining Stars"

Below are examples of continuing education programs that administrators singled out as being particularly effective in terms of meeting community needs. It is in these "Shining Star" programs that continuing education demonstrates its inventiveness and resourcefulness in getting different people from different parts of the community to meet special needs in spontaneous, creative ways. There is a common theme of partnership in these programs, with continuing education supplying initial impetus and leadership, while community groups, businesses, and the learners themselves contribute to developing the programs in directions that benefit the community. Some of the programs have evolved into major community events. Only one of these programs could take place within a traditional subject-and-teacher based curriculum.

The strengths of these programs testify to the larger role that continuing education can play in British Columbia society: one based on partnership, innovation, and an obvious concern for broader social and community needs and issues.

CAPILANO COLLEGE— ELDERCOLLEGE

Both regular college faculty and continuing education personnel provided initial leadership and services to this self-directed program, now in its first year. Directed by an Advisory Committee of volunteer seniors, Eldercollege provides member-led study groups to students 55 and over for a yearly membership fee. Each term, the study groups are advertised, and Eldercollege members can attend four sessions (or more for an additional, minimal fee). Flexible in payment structure, the Eldercollege is also offered on-campus and in various community locations. So far, Eldercollege has attracted more than 100 members and has garnered significant attention, including province-wide requests for speaking engagements and a special segment on CBC's "The Best Years."

CARIBOO COLLEGE— COMPUTER ACCESS CENTRE

This initiative provides micro-computer training throughout the region in a standardized, consistent format. Employers appreciate that the program provides reliable and appropriate training for both entry-level jobs and skill upgrading. The Centre offers certification up to the advanced level in word processing, spreadsheet applications, database management, and desktop publishing. Its courses fill up quickly, attracting 2,200 registrants in 185 courses per year.

DOUGLAS COLLEGE—PERINATAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Providing both overview and review for parents with previous perinatal education, as well as courses on breastfeeding, neo-natal issues, etc., this program offers more than 200 courses throughout Douglas College's region. Doctors and public health officials continue to provide advice for program development, instructors get continuous training and the chance to teach at different levels and in different locations, and the program has a fee waiver system so its available to parents of limited means.

EMILY CARR COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN—YOUNG ARTISTS BIENNIAL TOURING EXHIBITIONS

These exhibitions are important opportunities for art appreciation and education; they also give young artists a chance to exhibit throughout the province. The exhibitions attract submissions from more than 19,000 young people from every corner of B.C.'s education system, including extracurricular programs in art centres, community centres, and art galleries. Out of this, an extensive network of art educators, administrators, and parents has evolved, creating the opportunity for further development.

FRASER VALLEY COLLEGE—HARRISON FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

The Festival, now ten years old and nationally recognized, has won an award for its promotion of local tourism and features co-operation with business. The expertise gained has been shared at local, provincial, and international tourism conferences.

KWANTLEN COLLEGE—SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER ASSISTANT PROGRAM

The Continuing Education Department developed this part-time program. Offered in three locations, its participants are mostly women planning to re-enter the workforce. Ninety-five percent of its first graduating class got jobs as teacher aids. The program has been developed in cooperation with the school districts and employer representatives.

MALASPINA COLLEGE—VANCOUVER ISLAND CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL

Organized by community groups, college faculty, and continuing education personnel, the May festival is now five years old, with a national reputation and overwhelming local support. The festival has a number of appealing benefits, including the promotion of literacy and the joy of reading, introducing and encouraging children's interest in possible careers as writers or illustrators, and supporting the writers and illustrators themselves. Children actively contribute to the event, through a Children's Art Show, by painting posters, writing book reviews for local papers, and giving radio interviews about favourite books and authors.

NORTHERN LIGHTS COLLEGE—VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM

Throughout the huge college region, learners have benefited from this and the college's other First Aid programs, none of which are funded by the Ministry. The students get the safety training they need to work in the local petroleum and forest industries. The communities benefit by having trained volunteer ambulance staff on hand for enhanced public health and safety.

NORTHWEST COMMUNITY COLLEGE—ISSUES IN FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Using a speaker/panel/community discussion format, these seminars strive to help people interested in the management of crown forest lands to become better informed about issues such as Timber Harvesting Tenures, Use of Pesticides in Forest Management, and Effects on Public Health of Sawmill Waste Burning. Half of each seminar is given over to free discussion among all participants, and students can choose to attend all or any of the sessions.

Four: Continuing Education Policy Issues

This report of the Continuing Education Project maintains that continuing education is the means by which the education sector can truly become a lifelong learning system. In the 1990s, such an approach is necessary to ensure that adult learners have access to flexible and relevant part-time learning in order to satisfy their ongoing needs for skills and knowledge appropriate to their professional and personal development, and appropriate to the social and economic concerns of the province as a whole.

Consequently, the basic policy issue is whether the provincial government is seriously committed to lifelong learning and is prepared to modify the dominant "front-end loaded" model, in which young students enroll in a program for a number of years and then leave the educational system for the world of work. If the Province neither supports the continuing education mandate in the Act nor supports the ability of the colleges and institutes to carry it out, it should reduce the large volume of resources currently being expended. If it is committed, the steps described in the Recommendations (see Chapter Six) should be taken, so that an already flexible and innovative educational network can get on with the immense task of meeting the needs of B.C.'s adult learners.

Having summarized the findings of the Project in terms of the nature and extent of past and current continuing education provision, this chapter outlines the dimensions of issues facing the government with regard to continuing education provision.

College and Institute Act: Intent Versus Rhetoric

It is clear from the number and significance of the Continuing Education Project Advisory Committee's recommendations that a more comprehensive approach to continuing education is needed. The most important reason for this is the absence of a clear policy framework reflected in the *College and Institute Act* or in provincial policies.

The Act states that all institutions governed by it should provide "continuing education," but no definition of continuing education is given. Continuing education provision has developed situationally, in response to funding imperatives and learning needs, and in accordance with the importance allotted to it by individual administrators.

Despite the elimination of direct base funding for continuing education since 1984, all colleges and institutes are providing non-funded services and programs for the adult learner. Collectively, these involve thousands of students and millions of dollars, and they have direct and indirect effects on organizations, institutional expectations, and resource allocation. The provincial government has also been inconsistent, accepting some activities for funding although they are not "regular" or "formal" programs. That continuing education has, in fact, continued, can be seen as testimony to the belief of administrators and staff in its importance and necessity and as an indicator of the moral force of the Act's mandate.

Meanwhile, governments increasingly expect that institutions will be seeking collaborative relationships, joint and alternate forms of support and funding, and direct assistance in offering certain types of learning activities for

adults that were formerly funded by government. This implies an assumption on government's part that colleges and institutes are organized and, in fact, resourced to develop and deliver co-operative, co-managed, and externally funded programs.

There is rising dissatisfaction with this approach within the system, since government has placed the onus for developing non-traditional programs for adults on the continuing education system while providing little fiscal or administrative support. Indeed, what has developed from 1983-1984 to 1990-1991 is an eclectically managed system of part-time, largely vocational offerings, which are expected to pay for themselves. This tends to overlook the need to develop fully funded vocational, technical, and career programs for entry-level and retraining workers. It also overlooks any provision of education serving the non-vocational needs of

"There is very little intellectual or political support for 'lifelong learning' of part-time students although we hear about it constantly. If there were any political honesty concerning this issue, there would be clear legislature support and funding for the administration of a wide range of funded and non-funded credit and non-credit part-time learning activities. The Ministry needs to take a leadership role (set broad terms of reference) or educational institutes will evolve too slowly to meet the challenges of upgrading and retraining required in the 90s and beyond."

B.C. society. Instead of acting as the experimental wing of a larger, developing educational enterprise, continuing education has been used as an expedient substitute for other action.

To put it strongly, assigning to a tax-supported institution a responsibility that is not defined, not supported with resources, and not accounted for constitutes poor public policy, is an exercise in hypocrisy, or both. This attitude is especially ironic in light of the increasing mention of "Lifelong Learning," an accepted organizing principle for education at all levels that implies ongoing access to training and development for the students of today and for the workers and citizens of tomorrow, at any stage of their lives. "Lifelong Learning" figures both in the *Year 2000* planning document of the B.C. Ministry of Education and Ministry Responsible for Multiculturalism and Human Rights, and in the *B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology Annual Report (1990-1991).* The recently signed Canada/British Columbia Agreement on Labour Force Development, for example, is an effort to extend this concept to the economic sphere and encourage a "Training Culture."

From Training Culture to Learning Culture

Even a cursory glance at the employment opportunities ads in a newspaper will confirm that employers in the 1990s are looking for people who can manage information and communicate effectively, who are comfortable with and practised in using computers or other sophisticated technology, and who are able to analyze financial information and have a grasp of local, national, and global issues. These jobs, requiring a range and depth of skills, are not executive positions with six-figure salaries. They are more likely to be entry level or slightly above, in the $20,000 to $30,000 range.

The concept of a training culture refers to the ability of governments, employers, and educational institutions to provide for the training needs of the populace in order to compete in the global economy. Economists throughout the industrialized world have backed up this judgment by considering "human capital" as the primary natural resource of any nation, and occupational preparation as a vital concern of government and an important entitlement for the individual.

The implications of the global economy are clear. More workers are going back to school on a part-time basis to gain skills they need for their jobs. Employers cannot count on younger workers

meeting their needs. While a substantial portion of colleges and institutes activities are already occupationally related, these facts do not adequately reflect continuing education's larger context, or the possibility of it supporting social and community development in a flexible manner. The training culture context only reflects the pressure on educational institutions to provide for short-term, employment-oriented needs.

A move beyond training and towards a "learning culture" implies a more extensive consideration of adult students' needs. These students may go back to school at any time in their working lives, for many reasons. Their needs and priorities are not necessarily structured around an extended stay in school, nor are they necessarily focussed on the acquisition of specific job-related skills.

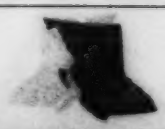
Ideally, a continuing education system would have the learner squarely at its centre, with a core curriculum available in a variety of forms, full-time or part-time, throughout life. This curriculum might deal with a number of social or political issues. It might also provide a core offering of generic occupational or organizational skills, suitable for either application in the workplace or involvement in the community.

The ideal is not immediately realizable. What is in place, however, according to respondents of the Project survey, is a system with relevant and flexible programs, responding quickly to the needs of the community and providing a sole contact between colleges and citizens in smaller communities, with initial involvement often leading to further contact. Continuing education proponents see continuing education as a bridge from the margin to the mainstream, a conduit for new learner/client markets and new opportunities for faculty members. Its programs encourage learners to expand their horizons and expose the college to changing environments and needs.

Funding

At a policy level, the conditions affecting the present non-funded, non-credit, and market-driven activities of a college or institute pose a direct challenge to the orderly, repetitive, and intensely unionized activities of government-funded programs that usually qualify students for formal institutional credit. It seems likely that continuing education can only develop beyond its present state if its importance is recognized by a corresponding change in funding policy. If the present situation were allowed to continue, the very responsiveness of continuing education could cause it to become limited to the economic priorities of individual institutions and stakeholders able to pay for vocational programs. This would deny continuing education the chance to develop other, more widely relevant programming areas. The government must make a decision whether to fund a coordinated, extensive program of continuing education.

The concentration of funding in the part-time vocational area has forced institutions to decrease their general interest and community service programming and to run their continuing education offerings on a cost-recovery basis, after maximizing student fees and contract relationships. Thus, fiscal allocations have become the primary determinants of organizational activities. Considerable tension and conflict result from this strain on resources, thus reducing adaptation and response to public need. The problem is exacerbated, as competition for these resources increases due to more intense union activity and the lag of public funding behind real costs. There is a further problem: educational institutions have adopted different methods of recording and allocating available funds and expenses, and the result is a difficulty in comparing financial information, which in turn makes overall fiscal planning more difficult.



The root of these problems is the funding system itself, which is based on high-volume institutionally based educational and service delivery, where costs are justified solely by economies of scale and unit productivity of the teacher. Its assumptions are based on the full-time, extended-duration student. This cannot, at this point, adequately serve the needs of the diverse and innovative continuing education system in B.C. Until the public funding system can do this, it will not be able to assist continuing education in realizing its potential for a larger social role.

Continuing Education and an Educated Citizenry: Social and Community Role

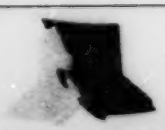
Continuing education in the past decade has functioned in a market economy. The rationale for adult learning activities can be linked to an industry and business need for more highly skilled workers. The ability of business, the individual, or Employment and Immigration Canada, for example, to pay for the programs dictates which programs are offered.

"Professionalism has been a major (if not the major) factor in the erosion of traditional community bases of support for individuals and families . . . people perceive themselves to be increasingly dependant on 'experts' to deal with the complexities of our society. This feeling of powerlessness does not just affect an individual's sense of personal responsibility, but also undermines people's willingness and perceived ability to reach out and help one another."

There are other, compelling reasons for the extension and development of continuing education, particularly in B.C., where colleges and institutes often operate at a considerable distance from major urban centres. Continuing education can contribute not only to the financial and occupational needs of citizens, but also to their personal and intellectual growth, and their ability to serve the communities. It can help develop citizenship in its fullest sense. Adult learners do not merely take continuing education courses to get training and then get a better job, but come to the continuing education system out of interest in a particular field of study or activity and a desire to develop themselves.

These learners may, of course, find ways to capitalize on the new knowledge but they may also take other courses, or enter further programs, simply because the initial entry has been made possible by a general interest course. Courses dealing with social, economic, or political issues may add increased interest and relevance to their jobs. A skills course of a hobby or craft nature might give such learners something interesting to do, and they may return to the system, eventually, as instructors or originators of new programs. Community services courses might encourage more learners to make volunteer contributions to their communities, which could only enhance the quality of life in B.C. and decrease social alienation.

Implicit in this approach is a recognition of education as an important vehicle for communities, as well as individuals, to realize their goals. Historically, adult education has always had a concern for personal and group empowerment. There are political and social reasons why the continuing education field should not remain largely restricted to part-time vocational offerings. A more informed, engaged citizen will be a more politically aware citizen, capable of leadership and decision making and capable of resisting prejudice and reactionary attitudes. It is also important to realize that continuing education has more to offer than frill or luxury activities for the middle class. Community service, and personal interest courses



delivered by continuing education units support community and personal development by empowering citizens; this is critical to many smaller and remote B.C. communities.

The current system has made no provision for these opportunities for change. Instead, there is a concern expressed by the Project survey respondents that service to the community has declined, and that continuing education might not be accessible to portions of B.C.'s population. This seems to have three characteristics:

- a reduction of service to community organizations (compared to the service provided to business, industry, and allied organizations)
- reduced program activity aimed at assisting deprived, needy, and disadvantaged people (and correspondingly reduced program visibility)
- a philosophical shift among community programmers from enfranchisement to training.

This last point is interesting, as it suggests a competitive relationship where community groups compete with educational institutions for federal funding to establish their own training programs.

Access

Following the *Report on Continuing and Community Education in British Columbia* in 1976, steps were taken by the B.C. government to address the needs of groups who were disproportionately excluded from education. Notwithstanding difficulties, large numbers of adults now have access to fully-funded basic education, secondary school equivalency and English language training. National evidence, however, suggests that there is a growing gap between the educational "haves" and "have nots."

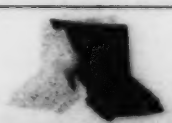
Within the continuing education system, there is little usable information regarding the presence or absence of various adult constituencies in college or institute programs. It is impossible, therefore, to tell whether women, ethnic minorities, First Nations learners, and other educationally disadvantaged adults are being adequately served. In a system founded on the principle of "Access for All," this is disturbing. There is a need for an adequate database that takes advantage of, and is compatible with, national training and adult education information and surveys (e.g., Statistics Canada *Adult Training and Education Surveys*).

Institutional dependence on contract, targeted expenditures and high student fees can act to exclude persons who are not clients of Employment and Immigration Canada. Steep fee increases have been offset by more funding involvement by employers, but this can hardly help those who are pursuing personal goals, who work for unenlightened supervisors, or who are not working. Part-time students, and especially part-time vocational students, pay more and receive fewer services than their colleagues in fully-funded programs, even if the programs are substantially identical. So, in addition to an access problem, there is an access to information and counselling services problem. This applies to the employed and unemployed and to formal and non-formal programs, and needs to be remedied among and inside institutions.

> *"While we continue to run community education and general interest programs, our client group increasingly has been upgraders, skill and job seekers. But this is surely a case of form following function. There is a huge need for leadership in the community in the areas of family education, sexism, racism, the national debate, global politics."*

Market Analysis Capacity

A lack of communication and coordination from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology regarding continuing



education has contributed to a weak linkage with labour market planning and to insufficient needs analysis and priority setting. Despite a concentration of programming in the career/technical/vocational area, continuing education has not been able to research and develop these programs in line with ongoing industry needs. Instead, units have concentrated on the delivery of simple, large-volume, entry-level programs, partly because continuing education units lack the means to ascertain the specific nature of their target markets. There is some guidance available in the form of the recent identification of clientele and responsibilities under the Canada/British Columbia Agreement on Labour Force Development, but there is no policy regarding different learner/client bases. Continuing education badly needs leadership. At present, each college and institute appears to inhabit its own world of bilateral relationships that have developed in response to circumstance rather than vision.

Curriculum and Professional Development

Compared to the well-organized field of International Education, there appears to be no strategic communications or staff capacity to address changing social conditions or respond to these changes with clearly articulated curricula. Despite the high degree of interaction in "core" or centrally funded activities, the colleges and institutes have not developed "laddering" between traditional and continuing education based programs, either as advanced standing or advanced placement. This works to everyone's disadvantage, as the institutions must perpetually invest scarce resources in developing curricula, rather than building on work elsewhere. A positive step has been the introduction of a small annual grant for continuing education curriculum development through the Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development.

Such efforts to develop continuing education must extend beyond programs to the people involved. Implicit in the Project Advisory Committee's vision of the future of continuing education is a certain image of its personnel—professionals who at, top speed, are able to:

- deal sensitively with internal and external constituencies
- organize complicated funding and cooperative arrangements
- develop and administer curriculum and instruction in a variety of environments.

Such people need access to better training. Many continuing education personnel are teachers whose training and education have been in a traditional subject matters; they should have reasonable opportunities to develop professionally.

At present there are two programs available: the Instructor's Diploma Program at Vancouver Community College, and the Diploma Program in Adult Education at UBC. Neither of these leads to a Bachelor's degree, and therefore neither can lead to graduate school, where the bulk of further training is available. There is a need for a B.Ed. degree in Adult Education, which could be most advantageously provided by one or more of the colleges already having four-year education programs, perhaps with specializations in such areas as distance education and vocational training.

The Policy Challenge

The provincial government has a formidable task ahead of it with respect to continuing education policy. It must decide what form a continuing education policy will take, how it should be funded, and sort out what different levels of curricula are required. It must also take steps to ensure adequate service to communities and access by citizens throughout the province. Without consistent policy support it will remain marginal and low profile, its goals ill-defined, its achievements unrecognized. Most of all, it will reduce the probability that B.C. will develop a strong lifelong learning system.

Five: Needs of the Nineties—Voices for Change

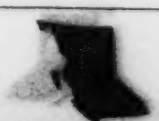
It is the overwhelming conclusion of the Continuing Education Project Advisory Committee that a coherent policy on continuing education in B.C. must be developed and implemented by the Province in order to provide for the needs of adult learners in the 1990s. Otherwise, the trends evident in continuing education during the period of restraint (i.e., financial marginality and uncoordinated diversity) will leave continuing education without direction in terms of identifying its market, effectively maintaining liaison with client groups, developing curricula that respond to current areas of political and social concern, and properly training its professionals. A lifelong learning system will not be realized in B.C. without a strong continuing education mandate.

Opportunities for Leadership

The Continuing Education Project Advisory Committee was fortunate to be able to draw on the experiences of a number of groups representing important provincial constituencies in addition to the colleges and institutes. These include the Business Council of British Columbia, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association (B.C. Division), Employment and Immigration Canada (EIC), and representatives of labour, First Nations, the voluntary sector, non-profit community service organizations, and universities and school districts. Representatives were asked to comment on activities within the colleges and institutes instead of on continuing education per se. These views are summarized in this section.

There was dissatisfaction in all their responses, reflecting their respective biases and needs. Some of the most critical commentary came from business, labour, industry, and EIC, which is surprising given the huge increase in occupationally related offerings during the past eight years. After follow-up telephone and personal interviews were held with the authors of the responses, with continuing education administrators, and among Advisory Committee members, there was unanimity that the following three areas were of vital relevancy to continuing education's role in B.C. society.

1. *Multiculturalism, Citizenship, and English Language Training*
   With the many immigrants who came to every region of B.C. in the past decade and the many who will come in the next, there is a need for community, non-formal, and cooperative education. Formal English language programs must be expanded, but will only help a relatively select group of younger, full-time students. Furthermore, issues of racial relations and citizenship education are not adequately addressed at the community level, despite clear indications of rising social tension and hostility. This can only increase as the economy weakens. Continuing education units could play an important community role in providing programs and services to facilitate multicultural development.



2. *First Nations*
   With the growing consensus on aboriginal title and an inherent right to self government, there has been a rapid increase in interest in First Nations self government and social programs including education. Aboriginal organizations and public institutions are competing for resources to increase Native learners' access to educational training. Provincial coordination is needed to assist in the development of Native institutional forms; college continuing education units can contribute, provided efforts are provincially coordinated and supported by the First Nations.

3. *Public Issues, Public Affairs, and the Future of Canada*
   Despite a huge investment within the colleges, continuing education has not contributed to the quality of public debate. Its activities, with a few notable exceptions, are not connected to the major issues shaking our nation (e.g., constitutional reform, economic policy vis-a-vis social programs, and aboriginal issues). Colleges and institutes should be mandated to provide opportunities for the general public to learn about and discuss key public issues.

Feedback from Provincial Constituencies

The last words go to the representatives of the provincial constituencies consulted during the Continuing Education Project. Some are highly critical of the system that exists. They have different emphasis. Their level of interest, and the willingness of many groups to seek further cooperation, bode well for the future of continuing education in B.C. Their remarks also symbolize the changing, demanding environment that continuing education exists in and must respond to in the 1990s.

BUSINESS COUNCIL OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The BCBC asserts that British Columbia is heavily involved in the evolution of the global economy, and is concerned that children and adolescents are not being adequately furnished with an educational background related to entrepreneurial attitudes and skills. At the earlier levels, there is little curriculum content related to economics and the world of work. Colleges, in its view, can be places where political activity and a negative attitude toward business and industry can be played out in a secure environment. The BCBC points to a low degree of "economic literacy" among Canadian adults despite their relatively high degree of formal education by international standards; the Council is worried about this, as education is vital for future prosperity.

Some institutions, particularly rural ones, are praised for their ability to establish partnerships with employers. Over time these relationships pay off for students, the local economy, and the institutions themselves. Cooperative education programs are singled out as being effective and worthy of support. There are positive developments; education is perceived as important, and business will certainly continue to look to the colleges for help, but the challenge is for the colleges to invest in better relationships with business.

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS

The CFIB response is drawn largely from data collected by its 1991 members' survey. This study showed that a shortage of qualified or satisfactory labour is a major problem to its members, who ranked it as one of the most important issues facing them. Member businesses have a strong commitment to training. Apparently 70% to 80% of small businesses provide training, but it is done informally and on-the-job, and therefore has not appeared as important as it is in other research reports.

The CFIB's satisfaction with post-secondary private and public institutions is markedly higher than with the secondary schools, but is still a "lukewarm," with a 64% satisfaction rating. This represents a marked drop from 1988, when B.C.

colleges and technical institutions were ranked very high by 86% of members. The CFIB supports private competition for training dollars and wants to see more input from the business community, but it still feels that there are opportunities for colleges and institutes to develop programs suitable for the training needs of small business, provided they are willing to move these activities to the job site.

CANADIAN MANUFACTURER'S ASSOCIATION—B.C. DIVISION

The CMA believes that training and education are vital components of a competitive, prosperous economy, and sees manufacturing as the key to that economy's growth. It would like to see training institutions change their attitudes and patterns of operation, and become more innovative, energetic, and competitive. The CMA has been disappointed, however, by a lack of college response to a training policy paper it issued in 1991, and it has begun to provide some direct educational services to its members in reaction to this perceived college complacency or indifference.

The CMA sees its 4800 small and medium manufacturing firms in B.C. as important ingredients in developing "value added" activities within the B.C. economy. The workers in these firms need to broaden and enhance their skills. Relationships with education and training establishments are therefore vital. In fact, some systematic relationships do exist between manufacturers and their local colleges and institutes, but no comprehensive approaches have been taken. Some companies use the federal Industrial Adjustment Services Program to subcontract with public institutions. The CMA considers an industry-specific training program developed by the plastics industry and BCIT as a particularly commendable example, and stresses that it was industry that showed the initiative.

The CMA is highly critical of colleges, claiming that they tend to look for assistance after the fact and often demonstrate ignorance of industrial needs, organization, and conditions. Furthermore, it asserts that college programming activity tends to be "yesterday's curriculum," not reflecting the qualitative needs of businesses for the future. CMA believes that colleges should listen to employers instead of future employees when developing curricula. To remedy this situation, the CMA proposes active consultation, needs analysis, and joint action at both the local chapter/college and provincial levels.

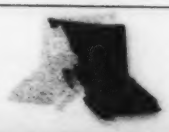
EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION CANADA

The EIC emphasizes its role as a major customer of colleges and institutes, second only to the Province itself. In 1989-1990 it purchased $29.7 million in educational services directly from colleges and institutes. Most of its expenditures are in vocational (including apprenticeship), English Language, and Basic Education areas.

Colleges and institutes are slowly becoming more responsive to market demands from EIC. However, EIC still perceives a general lack of response to real workplace needs. Further, while acknowledging that the process of learning is perhaps more complex than labour or management are prepared to acknowledge, the EIC has no sympathy with institutional desire for longer training periods. While college continuing education departments are a preferred contact because of their service-mindedness, organizational flexibility, and speed, EIC feels they must lower their costs and improve their quality of service if they are to be leaders in training. The EIC considers institutional arguments that their costs are higher because their quality is higher as invalid and not borne out by analyses. The EIC policy of favouring the private sector in their course purchases is intended to drive the public institutions to work more closely with the private sector.

ORGANIZED LABOUR

Organized labour is particularly concerned with the failure of the provincial government to ensure standardized courses throughout the province, and with problems of transferability. At present, the various skills training components (including apprenticeship, adult basic education,



literacy training, and the academic refresher often required to enter technical upgrading programs) appear to be offered on an institution-specific basis. The labour response in the Continuing Education Project cited instances of courses offered at one institution not being accepted at another. Labour feels it has a key role to play with government in establishing equivalency standards.

Labour observes that public support for upgrading and skills training is available primarily for those out-of-work and focusses on entry-level service jobs. There is no proactive program to improve workers' skills before their employers shut down, and no means to ensure informed or coordinated action by colleges and institutes.

Labour must also be an important partner in identifying needs for short-term and long-term training and in defining a much broader range of courses, particularly short ones for workers needing more current skills. A skilled labour force is essential to Canada's capacity to compete economically and realize the potential of our technological capabilities. This will take a major effort to ensure that workers are actively participating in lifelong learning activities.

The Project found few relationships with colleges in the field of labour education, with the exception of the Labour Studies Program at Capilano College. Colleges appear to be ignorant of and/or indifferent to the labour movement as a possible market or partner in education.

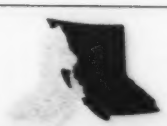
FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION

Continuing education can meet the real needs of aboriginal peoples, although the multitude of federal and provincial control agencies requires elaborate approval processes that limit aboriginal ownership of educational activity. This is not the direction in which First Nations people want continuing education to move. The Project's First Nations representative asserts that the solution to long-term social and economic programs has to be found through Native institutions. Primary action in this regard must come from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, which should initiate and coordinate support. The recent Ministry initiative of the Provincial Advisory Committee on Post-Secondary Education for Native learners has been most welcome.

Some fully-integrated continuing education programs leading to increased autonomy have been developed, such as those assisting in the development of law enforcement under First Nations auspices; however the lack of systematic funding and long-term policy commitment over the years has created isolated and fragmentary adult education activity in Native communities that often does not tie in to lifelong learning. Furthermore, the present system has built-in ironies, since colleges are expected to assist Native institutions to compete with them for the same limited resources.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR

While it has its roots in voluntary activity and the addressing of social problems, adult education has become professionalized and works through formal structures. The current slowing of this trend offers opportunities for rethinking purposes and relationships between institutions and the voluntary sector. If acted on, initiatives that train volunteers and have volunteers provide training might lighten the tax burden and limit social alienation. Some colleges have done excellent work in this area and could be role models. There has been a promising example of such an experiment in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation training, and there are possibilities for the use of community television in this area. Local economic development activities are also a promising arena for marrying resources and cooperative action.



NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Relationships between community service organizations and colleges and institutes were found to be ad hoc, random, and dependent almost entirely on personalities involved. There is a tendency for more community agency/college collaboration in non-metropolitan areas.

There appears to be a general absence among most colleges of any community development activity, even where there are good working relations with the community. In effect, community education and community development elements of adult education are not very prevalent in most colleges and institutes.

UNIVERSITIES AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

As colleagues in the delivery of adult and continuing education, the directors of continuing education in the three major universities and in the school districts were invited to share their perceptions of the relationships between themselves and the colleges.

Universities replied that there are few current formal relationships with the other institutions, although examples of previous working arrangements were mentioned.

The twelve school district directors who were surveyed during the Project reported that relations with colleges are generally positive, although only half of those described active dealings with post-secondary institutions. Most of the relationships described were essentially passive. There seems to be very little destructive competition and few resource conflicts. Duplication of services is also rare, because demand always outdistances the supply. There is a recognition that school districts and college continuing education programs play inherently complementary and supportive roles. There was some dissatisfaction that these have not been capitalized upon. There is a recognition of the desirability of proactive planning, coordination, and joint programming between continuing education units in both sectors. There is also the realization that such activities imply a level of policy support that does not yet exist.

Six: A Continuing Education Strategy—Conclusion and Recommendations

The Continuing Education Project Advisory Committee's underlying theme was that a comprehensive system of continuing education provision is the necessary foundation of a lifelong learning society, which is vital in the 1990s given B.C.'s economic, social, and fiscal climate. Economic restructuring, technological change, globalization of trade, and rapidly changing social circumstances have made quick, ongoing access to part-time education and training for personal, community, and workplace use essential.

The Advisory Committee has also recognized that there is a great and only partially realized potential for continuing education to address major issues facing our society (e.g., constitutional affairs, environmental concerns, resource use, labour adjustment, the promotion of multiculturalism, and the reduction of racism through education).

In general, the Advisory Committee found that, if the colleges and institutes are to effectively respond to changes in B.C. society, they would have to develop and articulate short-term and ongoing curricula for a variety of groups, improve their marketing and communication, and plan for and accommodate a further increase in an already majority part-time student population. Increased leadership and support from the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology is virtually a mandatory requirement for enhancing the present continuing education system. If Ministry involvement in continuing education remains the status quo, the shortcomings in the present system will become its hallmark, instead of characteristics of a brief period in its history.

The lack of funding for new program and curriculum development in the technical and career/vocational field has resulted in continuing education units carrying the responsibility for delivering self-funded occupational programs. There are clear limits to these efforts without provincial coordination and sharing of results. Clear policy leadership would assist in the dissemination of newly developed curricula across the province. As well, there is little usable information concerning accessibility to the system by various client groups, which is disturbing in an educational system operating on the principle of widespread accessibility. Finally, while the lack of clear organizational responsibility has resulted in diversity among continuing education units, it has also limited their organizational role and tended to obscure consensus regarding their role in relation to a lifelong learning mission.

Although continuing education once existed in an active sense in government policy, it now exists as a marginal and relatively disorganized provincial activity among colleges and institutes. The fact that it exists at all is due to the dedication of personnel at the institutional level; there have been few incentives or expectations from government. Even so, continuing education is rooted in government mandate and public expectation. It is a lot larger than is commonly realized and serves many people—many of whom are important resources for the continuing educa-

tion system itself. It is also closely connected with the desired long-term direction for colleges and institutes. It has a necessary global education function that must not be limited to occupational tasks, but rather be a key service for a citizenry eager for knowledge and adapting to a changing world. The long-term utility of colleges and institutes in B.C. is closely connected with its responsiveness to social, economic, and demographic change. This is precisely what continuing education has proven it can do, even without guidance: be flexible, responsive, and innovative.

Both government and institutions are responsible for the current inadequate situation. Institutions must be prepared to get out of a narrowly competitive frame of mind and actively share information and collaborate; government must provide support and leadership, exactly as it has done, for example, in the field of international education. Such energy, if applied to the field of continuing education, would result in a dramatic improvement in the quantity, quality, and diversity of learning opportunities for B.C. citizens.

It is the opinion of the Continuing Education Project Advisory Committee that B.C. citizens deserve better. They can benefit from coordination of provincial activity to ensure appropriate responses to social and economic need, from improved instruction and curricula, from expedited and coordinated information to all institutions.

Only when continuing education is recognized as the means by which a philosophy of Lifelong Learning becomes active and engaged will B.C. truly have a Learning Culture.

Recommendations

The Continuing Education Project Advisory Committee urges that Lifelong Learning become the core vision for Advanced Education in British Columbia, and continuing education be recognized as the means of achieving that vision. It is therefore recommended that:

- the *College and Institute Act* be modified to state that the fundamental purpose of colleges and institutes in British Columbia is to provide a system of Lifelong Learning with the needs of the adult learner as a central focus

- the name of the Act be modified to *The Lifelong Learning Act*, in order to emphasize its purpose rather than institutional forms.

RECOMMENDED SUPPORTING POLICIES

1. that "continuing education" be defined in the appropriate statute, in order to provide clear intent and purpose as a guide to institutional discretionary action

2. that institutions charged with continuing education tasks be accountable for their activities and use of direct and indirect resources

3. that college and institute continuing education activity be relevant to economic, cultural, and social needs of the province and the people of its regions

4. that colleges be expected to collaborate with school districts and other agencies in providing continuing education services and community services appropriate to the economic, social, and cultural needs of the region

5. that user-supported educational activities not exclude individuals lacking adequate financial support

6. that comprehensive, flexible, and accessible training opportunities for adult educators and trainers in all sectors be available throughout the province

ACTION PLAN

The following actions regarding continuing education in colleges and institutes are hereby recommended:

- that a provincial consultation on continuing education involving institutions governed by the *College and Institute Act* be convened under the auspices of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology (this consultation should consider and recommend changes to the Act in respect to lifelong learning and the role of continuing education activities in achieving that objective)
- that basic administrative and program development capacity for continuing education be included in the institutional base budget and formula factors as named activities
- that the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology implement a consistent annual reporting system for continuing education activities to enable and encourage the sharing of information throughout the province (see the *Report of the Continuing Education Project Advisory Committee*)
- that the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology assist the colleges and institutes to establish ongoing communication with provincial economic and social constituencies, in order that those constituencies can provide advice and resources to help the colleges and institutes to develop their continuing education and labour market response programs
- that this report be provided to the B.C. Human Resource Development Project, for consideration by its participants
- that the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology ensure that colleges and institutes have the benefit of direct liaison with the Skills Development and Science and Technology Divisions of the Ministry to participate in industry-based projects, labour market research, and policy discussions
- that basic personal interest and community services program capacity be provided to each college via the program profile process, and that the relationship of colleges and school districts in the context of community services, career, technical, and vocational activities be the subject of provincial agreement
- that the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology investigate the feasibility of a support system in designated learning areas of social and economic significance for part-time learners unable to afford fees
- that the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology establish a capacity to plan and coordinate provincial goals and activities pertaining to continuing education in colleges and institutes through the planning process (this coordination should include direct involvement of colleges, institutes, and—where possible—school districts, with local labour force development boards to be developed pursuant to the Canada/British Columbia Agreement on Labour Force Development)
- that colleges and institutes devise a system of curriculum sharing, assessment, and articulation in continuing education that will ensure efficient and effective diffusion of services throughout the province
- that the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology sponsor the development of a continuing education information and marketing analysis "brokerage agency" that can continually survey and communicate provincial and extra-provincial developments in the field (such a service should allow the efficient distribution of tested innovations, at low cost)
- that the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology address the matter of training needs in the field of continuing education, by undertaking a study of:
  - the learning opportunities needed in adult training and education throughout the province
  - the new policies and programs needed to provide a satisfactory range of training opportunities (the study should give due attention to the connections and means of progression between and among programs)
  - the means by which prior learning assessment can be applied to the status, accreditation, and career development of adult trainers and educators.